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Massachusetts Senior Action Council, Inc.

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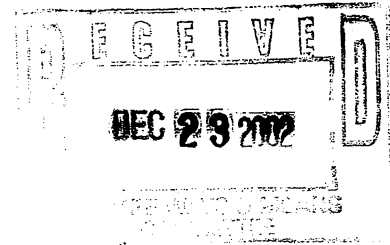
December 20, 2002

Senator Mark Montigny

Hon. Nancy Flavin

State House

Boston, MA 02133



Executive Director

John M. Boesen

RE: Comments of the Final Report - Advisory Commission on Consolidated Health Care Financing

Dear Senator Montigny & Representative Flavin,

The final report prepared by the consultants fails to accomplish its primary assigned task; that of developing a plan to consolidate health care financing. When a number of health care advocates, including myself, met with Rep. Haley and you, Senator, prior to the introduction of § 32 of chapter 141, establishing a consolidation plan was a key ingredient of our support. Concern for this omission was raised after each of the preliminary drafts, but was unfortunately ignored.

The report does demonstrate that single payer is the only system that would guarantee coverage to every Massachusetts resident. The report does well in graphically illustrating the billions of dollars of waste in our present fragmented and inefficient system. However, the single payer model used in the report would have shown even greater savings if it had eliminated all insurance based care.

The final report's recommendation to continue building onto MassHealth flies in the face of today's reality. We are now in a period of reverse incrementalization, with the poorest and frailest among us losing their access and coverage. Only when we have a system where everyone is an equal stakeholder will we be able to protect the most vulnerable members of our society.

The Commission's final report comes out at a time of crisis for health care in Massachusetts. Because of the budget crisis created by the economic downturn and excessive tax breaks to corporations and the wealthy, over 50,000 recipients of Mass Health will lose their coverage next year.

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Thousands of seniors are being thrown out of medicare HMO's and workers are paying more and more for less and less health care coverage. Early next year, workers at GE in Lynn may strike over increased health care costs. In fact, most strikes over the past decade have been about who pays how much for what level of health care. The number of completely uninsured is going up and the World Health Organization rates our nation 37th in the world in health care coverage for our people.

Without a system in which everyone is an equal stakeholder, every time there is an economic downturn, the health care of the poorest among will be sacrificed first.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Phil Mamber".

Phil Mamber,
President